

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01693 090757Z

10

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 AID-05 SAM-01 TRSE-00 /088 W

----- 074923

R 090615Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3391

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1693

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY,HIZ

SUBJ: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EUPHRATES WATER DISPUTE

REFS: A. BAGHDAD 0477; B. JIDDA 3186; C. DAMASCUS 1414

(ALL NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: DAMASCUS PRESS IS CONTINUING ITS PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST IRAQ. SYRIAN EUPHRATES DAM MINISTER KAHHALEH TOLD PRESS MAY 6 THAT EUPHRATES WATERS SHOULD BE DIVIDED ON PERCENTAGE RATHER THAN QUANTITY BASIS AND CALLED FOR BRINGING TURKEY INTO NEGOTIATIONS. SYRIANS APPEAR CONFIDENT OF REACHING AGREEMENT WITH TURKS; WE UNDERSTAND BILATERAL TURKISH-SYRIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM HAS ALREADY REACHED PENULTIMATE POINT CONCERNING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DAMASC 01693 090757Z

EUPHRATES WATERS AND HAS MOVED ON TO OTHER SUBJECTS.

PRESIDENT ASAD DEVOTING MUCH PERSONAL ATTENTION TO IRAQ DISPUTE, AND MORE SYRIAN MILITARY FORCES ARE BEING MOVED TO TABQA DAM REGION. SECURITY SERVICES HAVE REPORTEDLY ARRESTED BROTHER OF MICHEL AFLAQ. REPORT OF SEVEN IRAQI PILOTS DEFECTING TO SYRIA IS APPARENTLY TRUE. SAUDI MEDIATION APPEARS TO HAVE ACHIEVED SOME POSITIVE RESULTS DEFINING TERMS AND EXCHANGING POSITION DETAILS. SYRIA SEEMS PREFER KEEP MEDIATION EFFORTS WITHIN ARAB FAMILY TO EXCLUSION OF SOVIETS, WHO WE UNDERSTAND RAISED ISSUE WITH BOTH HUSSEIN AND KHADDAM DURING THEIR RECENT MOSCOW VISITS. END SUMMARY.

2. SYRIAN EUPHRATES DAM MINISTER SUBHI KAHHALEH MAY 6 HELD PRESS CONFERENCE (SUMMARIZED FBIS) IN WHICH HE REVEALED ELEMENTS OF SYRIAN NEGOTIATING POSITION ON EUPHRATES WATERS DISPUTE. MAIN STICKING POINT ACCORDING TO KAHHALEH WAS IRAQI INSISTENCE THAT IT BE GUARANTEED ANNUAL QUANTITY OF WATER, WHEREAS SYRIA DEMANDING THAT ALL PARTIES SHARE WATERS ON PERCENTAGE BASIS. ASSIGNING FIXED QUANTITY OF WATER AS IRAQIS PROPOSED, KAHHALEH POINTED OUT, MIGHT DEPRIVE SYRIA OF MINIMUM NECESSARY SUPPLIES DURING "BAD WATER YEARS," SUCH AS PRESENT ONE. SYRIA USED TO RECEIVE TWENTY-SEVEN BILLION CUBIC METERS ANNUALLY FROM TURKEY BUT THIS YEAR EXPECTS TO RECEIVE ONLY THIRTEEN BILLION, AND IRAQIS REQUESTING FOURTEEN BILLION FROM SYRIA. KAHHALEH ALSO CALLED FOR TURKEY TO BE BROUGHT INTO NEGOTIATIONS (GOVERNMENT SYRIA APPARENTLY ASSURED OF BEING ABLE TO CONCLUDE DEAL WITH TURKEY. EMBASSY ANKARA REQUESTED COMMENT ON THIS ISSUE IN LIGHT FONMINISTRY SOURCE STATEMENT REF C).

3. SARG OFFICIALS SEEM TO BE DEVOTING INCREASING AMOUNT OF ATTENTION TO DISPUTE WITH IRAQ. WE RELIABLY INFORMED THAT MAJOR CABINET SHIFT AS WELL AS NUMBER OF KEY DECISIONS BEING HELD UP BY PRESIDENT ASAD'S NEAR EXCLUSIVE FOCUS ON IRAQI-SYRIAN PROBLEM. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT SYRIA HAS MOVED ADDITIONAL MILITARY FORCES INTO DAM REGION AT TABQA FEARING IRAQI
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DAMASC 01693 090757Z

SABOTAGE TO DAM. SYRIAN SECURITY SERVICES HAVE ALSO REPORTEDLY ARRESTED BROTHER OF MICHEL AFLAQ (BAATHO PARTY FOUNDER PRESENTLY LIVING IN EXILE IN BAGHDAD) WHO WORKING AT MIDDLE-LEVEL POSITION IN MFA. HDEFECTING IRAQI PILOTS MENTIONED REF A SUPPOSEDLY NUMBER SEVEN ACCORDING TO UPI REPORT ORIGINATING FROM DAMASCUS AND PUBLISHED IN BEIRUT PRESS APRIL 27. BRITISH EMBOFF MAY 7HSTATED THAT UK EMBASSY BAGHDAD HAD

CONFIRMED THAT SIX OR SEVEN PILOTS HAD DEFECTED TO SYRIA WITH AIRCRAFT.

4. SOVIET FIRST SECRETARY POPOV TOLD EMBOFF MAY 7 THAT SOVIETS HAD RAISED ISSUE OF EUPHRATES DISPUTE WITH BOTH SADDAM HUSSEIN AND KHADDAM DURING THEIR RECENT VISITS,HBUT ADDED THAT HE "UNCERTAIN" OF RESPONSE.

5. DAMASCUS PRESS CONTINUED ITS PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN WITH PUBLICATION ON MAY 6 FRONT PAGE AL-BAATH OF CABLE SENT BY "EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF NATIONAL FEDERATION OF IRAQI STUDENTS" IN DAMASCUS CONDEMNING THE "FASCIST RIGHT" IN IRAQ FOR ITS "NATIONAL TREASONS" AND USE OF EUPHRATES WATER ISSUE AS "PRETEXT TO HARM SYRIA."

6. COMMENT: WE AGREE WITH JIDDA'S ASSESSMENT (REFTEL B) THAT SAUDI MEDIATION HAS PRODUCED SOME POSITIVE RESULTS IN FIELD OF INFORMATIONAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN TWO PRINCIPAL PARTIES TO DISPUTE. ISSUE OF QUANTITY VS. PERCENTAGE OF WATER HAS AT LEAST BEEN CLARIFIED ON TECHNICAL LEVEL.HNECESSITY OF INVOLVING TURKEY IN FINAL AGREEMENT ALSO GIVEN PROMINENCE. ATMOSPHERICS HERE, HOWEVER, DO NOT AUGUR WELL FOR PROGRESS ON POLITICAL FRONT, WHICH HOLDS KEY TO RESOLUTION OF ISSUE. AS FOR SOVIET MEDIATION,HIT SEEMS FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT THAT SYRIA WOULD PREFER TO KEEP DISPUTE AN "ARAB" ONE AND NOT GO OUTSIDE THE FAMILY FOR MEDIATORS WHEN SAUDIS, ARAB LEAGUE, YEMENIS AND NOW POSSIBLY SOMALIS ALL SEEM ANXIOUS TO OFFER THEIR SERVICES.
MURPHY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS, WATER RIGHTS, RIVERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC01693
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750162-0938
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750563/aaaacfdl.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BAGHDAD 0477, 75 JIDDA 3186, 75 DAMASCUS 1414
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <18 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN EUPHRATES WATER DISPUTE
TAGS: PFOR, SY, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006